

C. Collamati, “Can a constitution be made? Hegel and the political role of social interests”, in *Political Theory* (accepted after double peer-review, publication expected by autumn 2025).

Abstract:

At the beginning of the 19th century, just as the term liberalism was stabilizing in the face of the two opposing ideologies of conservatism and socialism, Hegel was quick to diagnose the “bankruptcy” of liberalism. His thinking, however, remains marked by ambivalence towards liberalism. Admitting that modern politics is founded entirely on the idea of a “reign of freedom”, Hegel also formulated one of the most pertinent criticisms of a series of eminently liberal concepts.

The article examines Hegel's position towards political liberalism from the point of view of the relationship between constitution and political representation. It focuses on the way in which Hegel detached the concept of representation from the semantics of a sovereign will (whether individual or general), to think about the representation of interests, and more precisely of *social interests*. A dimension which is not that of purely individual interest, nor of a general interest, but which concerns a heterogeneous plurality, which must find a form of unification without renouncing its plural and differentiated character. First, I'll review the relationship between *Verfassung* and *Konstitution*, drawing on well-known paragraphs from *Principles of the Philosophy of Law* (1821) and the *Encyclopedia* of 1830. In the second part, I will underline the implications of this vision of the constitution for the way in which the question of political representation is posed, as the representation of the parts and not of the whole. In the third part, I will further explain why the question of social interests is fertile ground for measuring Hegel's ambivalent position towards political liberalism and its relationship with economic liberalism. One of the aims of the article will be to determine whether Hegelianism embodies a deepening of liberal modernity in a truly political sense, or whether, on the contrary, it opens a way out of its conceptual matrix.